



# Margaret McMillan Nursery School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 100384  
**Local Authority** Islington  
**Inspection number** 285783  
**Inspection date** 8 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Sue Vale

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery	<b>School address</b>	Hornsey Rise
<b>School category</b>	Maintained		London
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	0-5		N19 3SF
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7281 2745
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	82	<b>Fax number</b>	020 7281 6474
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr P Stanton-lfe
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms M Hart
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 March 2001		

<b>Age group</b> 0-5	<b>Inspection date</b> 8 February 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 285783
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. Provision for children aged 0 to 2 years was inspected in January 2006.

## **Description of the school**

Margaret McMillan Nursery School is a full-time place nursery for 104 with children attending full and part time. It is undersubscribed because of the expected move into new premises. Currently 25% of children are learning English as an additional language. The clientele has changed since the last inspection and many families originate from Eastern Europe. There is one child identified with learning difficulties or disabilities. Attainment on entry is broad. The Nursery school was designated a Children's Centre in September 2004; however, there has been limited progress towards this as building work has been going on for the last three years. On a number of occasions the anticipated move has been postponed.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Margaret McMillan Nursery is a good school and children receive a good start to their education. The headteacher's leadership of the nursery is excellent and she is guiding it well through this time of transition. However, there is scope for extending the involvement of outside agencies, parents and others in developing the children's centre. Governors make a strong contribution and are fully supportive of the Nursery's work and its development. The frequent changes to the date of moving into new premises have had an adverse effect on the numbers attending the nursery and they are currently at half their available capacity. Despite this parents are quick to point out that 'the disruption to the children has been minimal...and the staff should be commended for this.'

Children begin school with a wide range of abilities but with broadly average knowledge, skills and understanding. There are increasing numbers of children who are less skilled in their physical, personal, social and emotional development. Good teaching and an interesting curriculum in which children are encouraged to be independent helps them to settle in quickly and to achieve well. Occasionally the staff intervene too quickly in some activities and this hampers the development of independent learning skills. Children make good progress during their time at Nursery and reach the early learning goals for children of their age. They leave well prepared for their time at primary school. They have a good grasp of communication and mathematical skills although are less secure in using computers. Overall they have good skills which prepare them for the next stage of their education.

Children's individual progress and learning are observed and carefully noted in their individual portfolios. These observations are used effectively to plan the next step in their learning. Children make good progress in their personal development and well-being. Whilst drinks are readily available throughout the sessions there are no healthy snacks available. For some children this is a long time to manage without food. Children appear very happy at Nursery. They were certainly keen to discover more about the snow which had fallen overnight. Some have good levels of concentration when engrossed in an activity which captures their imagination. As a parent commented, the way the Nursery is run means that 'our son has blossomed.' The Nursery has good capacity to improve still further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the start already made towards becoming a children's centre, particularly by increasing the involvement of children's families, the community and external agencies.
- Make sure that the staff's intervention in children's learning contributes to the development of independence and capitalises on children's interests in using computers.
- Review the policy about the provision of healthy snacks.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children, including the increasing numbers learning English as an additional language, achieve well. There are increasing numbers of children who start with below expected skills in social, emotional and physical development. Adults are very aware of this and plan a good range of activities which encourage children to settle quickly and make a good start to school life. Consequently, children make good progress and achieve standards appropriate for their age. This is because of good quality teaching and adult interaction which encourage children to make their own choices, along with an interesting practical curriculum. The children soon become confident although on a few occasions staff intervene too quickly, which hampers the development of some aspects of independent learning.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. Children are interested and keen to discover more about the world around them. This is helped by the interesting learning environment, both indoors and outside. Real enthusiasm bubbled over and their children's curiosity was aroused by the fall of snow which fired their imagination. Children appear happy to come to Nursery and attendance is satisfactory. Their behaviour is outstanding. Although some are at first a little reluctant to try out new things adults are skilled in encouraging them to discover and learn so that children become confident learners who show high levels of enjoyment. Most show good levels of concentration for their age in choosing activities and seeing them through to the end. This prepares them well for the next step in their education. Children and their families make a positive contribution to the Nursery community. Whilst drinks are provided throughout the session there are no healthy snacks on offer and for some children this is quite a long time to go without food.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Children make good progress in their learning and achieve well because of the good way in which teachers interact with children. The Nursery is fortunate to have extra staff at present and so the ratio of adults to children is very high, which really helps children to make good progress in their learning as they receive a lot of adult attention. On some occasions adults step in too readily to support children instead of leaving them a little longer to discover for themselves whether something will or will not work. Parents are very pleased with the teaching; as one commented, 'The teachers have very firm boundaries while still engaging with

all children.' This is because sessions and activities are well planned and adults are skilled in talking to the children. Children enjoy learning because teachers encourage them to make their own choices.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good with some outstanding features. It captivates children's interest and as one parent commented, 'Everything is extremely well thought out.' Basic skills are taught well through encouragement and interesting, practical hands-on activities. Children are limited in their opportunities to use information and communication technology independently but there are plans for more opportunities to be integrated into the curriculum when the nursery moves. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are new to learning English are fully catered for. The children are fortunate to have such a marvellous outside garden in which to play and enhance their learning. It was lovely to see it still used, despite the heavy fall of snow, to build the snowman. As a parent said, 'The school is a caring, creative and fun environment which the children appear to thrive in.'

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. Children receive a positive start to their school life. Currently there is a high number of staff, which has enhanced the support for individuals. Parents commented, 'We are really happy with the care our child receives.' Child protection procedures are fully in place and are understood and followed by staff. Risk assessments and procedures for monitoring the health and safety of the children are robust. The academic guidance is good. Children's progress is tracked carefully through their individual portfolios to highlight their achievements, and targets are set from this information. The care, guidance and support are also extended to families through regularly held parents' workshops, which are highly valued by parents.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. Leadership by the headteacher is outstanding. Her vision for the development of the Nursery as a children's centre still holds true, despite numerous setbacks over the last three years. Through her enthusiasm and determination disruption to the children's education throughout this unsettled period has been kept to a minimum. Governors are knowledgeable and supportive. They ask searching questions and have given positive support in aiming for the development of the children's centre. There is a higher than average carry-forward of the budget. The governors have designated this money to be spent when the Nursery moves to develop a greater role for the Nursery in the community as a children's centre. Parents are fully included in their children's education and regular questionnaires are given to

seek their opinions of how the Nursery could be improved. The school involves other agencies well in its work but there is scope to extend this and to involve the community more in the development of the children's centre.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I really enjoyed visiting your Nursery. It is a lovely friendly place to learn and a wonderful start to your education. I really liked the outside area and garden that you have; it looked beautiful in the snow.

You and your teachers do lots of things really well.

- You are very good at concentrating on activities when you are interested in them.
- You work hard and learn lots of interesting things.
- Your teachers help you learn and show you how to do new things.
- You are very good at finding out about things and how they work and about the world around you. Do you remember building the snowman?
- You are looked after and cared for well.

Your headteacher and other staff are very good at what they do. They are always looking for ways to keep you safe and healthy and I have asked them to think about giving you healthy snacks during the sessions. They are working very hard to get ready for turning the Nursery into the Children's Centre. They are also looking at ways of giving you more time to use computers and learn on your own.

With best wishes

Sue Vale

Lead inspector